

CORPOGRAVURE OF A CIRCLE MEETING: POETICS AND POLITICS OF BLIND WOMEN IN BRAZIL

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ABSTRACT

This text is an ethnographic report of shared authorship between members of the Brazilian Movement of Blind and Low Vision Women and the anthropologist Olivia von der Weid. We interweave embodied narratives about the unique ways in which the experience of being a visually impaired woman is expressed in their bodies and lives. Understanding that the bonds and connection established in a circle with other women is a fundamental link in the composition of this collective, members of the movement share their marks and what they have inaugurated in themselves, their ways of re-existing after the destabilizations experienced in their training and employment trajectories. Bringing the body, gestures, and movement as motivating elements of exchange and production of knowledge, treating skin as a map of our experiences, we compose here a live image of an event, a *corpogravure*, with the embodied words of visually impaired women and what they reverberate.

KEYWORDS

gender, body, blindness, art
activism

DOI

[https://doi.org/10.54916/
rae.125087](https://doi.org/10.54916/rae.125087)

**DATE OF
PUBLICATION**

30.12.2022

INTRODUCTION

What does it mean to perform social activism in the feminine way? What does it mean to perform social activism in the feminine way, being a woman with visual impairment and living in a country such as Brazil? What are the qualities, impulses, meanings, and poetics that emerge from this bodily condition, this particular way of being in the world, in the present time? These are the major underlying questions in our current investigation, which we explore through a set of activities developed in partnership with women who are members of the Brazilian Movement of Blind and Low Vision Women (MBMC, in the Portuguese acronym)¹. One central activity for this research is the Poetics of Being Workshop, where we engage in a thought process of the body and writing together, in which the artistic field and somatic practices serve as our tools for action.

This text is an ethnographic report of shared authorship between women members of MBMC and anthropologist Olivia von der Weid. We propose here an experimentation with the modes of image production from non-visibility, based on a workshop on the employment history of visually impaired women experienced during the 5th National Meeting of the Brazilian Movement of Blind and Low Vision Women, held in October 2019 in the city of Curitiba, Brazil. Understanding that the bonds and connection established in the circle with other women is a fundamental link in the composition of this collective, members of the movement share their marks and what they have inaugurated in themselves (Rolnik, 1993), their ways of re-existing after the destabilizations experienced in their training and employment trajectories. We aspire to explore an engaged research methodology and a collaborative anthropological writing that is conscious of bodily rhythms, movements, interpersonal sharing of substances and affections, and the visceral experience of fieldwork—and life—in producing knowledge.

The privileged role that the body and the senses occupy in contemporary anthropological analyses can also be understood as a manifestation of the crisis in the epistemology and politics of Western thought. Giving up the distance that separates the world from our knowledge about it, the paradigm of textuality is rejected in favor of more practical and creative engagements. A phenomenology of embodiment has gained relevance in the social sciences. The inspiration Bourdieu

(2011) finds in Merleau-Ponty is a good example. However many anthropologists also draw on the phenomenological approach to perception and the body as a counterpoint to an interpretation of embodied experience in terms of a cognitive or linguistic model. On this path, we can mention “radical empiricism” (Jackson, 1989), the “somatic modes of attention” (Csordas, 2008), or the notion of “organism” (Ingold, 2000). Contrary to the separation between matter and thought, body and mind—the founding principles of hegemonic modern science that sustain the immateriality of thought—, these authors seek to include the material basis of life in the production plan of knowledge, calling attention to matter and body as its operators. In these theories, meaning is not just a symbol that exists on a mental level, separate and external to the actions of the body.

How does one bring into research and ethnographic writing a sensibility that takes into account the vital dimension of corporeality? Everyday practices and experiences serve as the underlying knowledge for unraveling the sensory universe of blindness, promoting an investigation into the role of perception, movement, and senses in developing ways of life. Knowledge relies on a mode of being in the world that is inseparable from our embodiment (Varela, Thompson & Rosch, 1993). Cognition, through an enactive approach (Maturana & Varela, 1995), results from experiences that derive from having a body, and its distinct sensory-motor skills. Experience is thereby regarded as a form of thought (Nöe, 2004), and blindness an embodied philosophy: a set of knowledges developed in action, through the learning and invention of bodily techniques (Mauss, 2003). The poetic and political belief of our analysis emphasizes the differences in such universes, and not their similarities, with visual experiences. Through methodology and writing, we strive to create a form of equivalence, an environment where vision and blindness may establish a dialogue as two distinct ontological sensory modalities, translating and transposing perceptual modalities, sensitive worlds, and embodied knowledge.

Since theory in anthropology is ethnographic, the tactile close-up view of blindness (Bavcar, 2003) leads us to a reflection on writing in search of creating coherence between the phenomenon being revealed, the corporeal way of accessing this knowledge and the way of communicating it. This leads us to the development of a writing that also has a tactile aesthetic, a tactile proximity, a writing

of those who touch and are touched, of those who let themselves be affected to the very edge of their skin, thereby producing a *corpogravure*. Reverberating an anthropology that breaks your heart (Behar, 1996), we seek here to develop an ethnographic narrative that explores the interweaving of bodies and emotions and the political, personal, and poetic engagements of blind women. An anthropology woven on the border between experience and representation, art and life.

The body is where social and natural forces intersect. Awakened bodies fertilize thoughts. In times of catastrophes, the need to fight walks hand in hand with the need for healing (Stengers, 2007/2018). Sorority joins *dorority* (union through pain, Piedade, 2017) in a circular ritual that regenerates wounds through encounters, through the ventilation of traumas left behind by *ableism* in our bodies and subjectivities (Campbell, 2009). A regeneration of poisoned resources, as much as our words—words that associate blindness with darkness, with tragedy, ignorance, suffering, or failure. This project believes in the transformative power of words, how embodied concepts empower us to think, feel and act. Our work involves sensory body activation to devise a language capable of displacing dominant subjectivation patterns. We seize the embodied word as a vehicle to create worlds, to formulate new existential territories.

Through the sense of touch, specific to the skin organ, we experience the world, the sensations, and other beings that are part of it. But skin transcends its functions of protection, warmth, and exchange—the immediacy of the now—it carries within itself the history of our touches, the traces of our existence. In this coating, the marks stamped by time, by circumstantial accidents or by pure desire are also narratives that tell the story of the individual and their relationships, the permanent and current transmission of a biography. The memory marks are a sensorial memory present in our skin: a trace, a violence that destabilizes but also poses the demand to create a new body. Along with the violence and oppression suffered, another logic is also acting there, tracing a new birth. This membrane that covers us also puts us in contact, in communication with the world.

This text is the fruit of an encounter in a circle. It is the portrait of a singular event that still reverberates in our skin. We exercise here an experience writing (Bondía, 2002), a description of the intensities that emerge from the encounter, collecting and

choosing words that can name the often deformed and ambiguous set of sensations that crossed us. Suppose the visual is the privileged aspect in the processes of symbolization. In that case, we seek, with the process of creating images with blindness, to imprint a cadence and an outline to the writing that escapes the visuocentrism of language and the ways of proceeding knowledge in anthropology (Fabian, 1983, Verine, 2013, von der Weid, 2017), seeking to meet the multiple possibilities of representation developed by blind women from their practices, poetics and sensory ways of being in the world. The image we offer here we call *corpogravure*. It is not frozen in any support; it lives in our skins and is renewed in the embodied words we extract from this tissue.

ABOUT THE MOVEMENT AND OUR TIES

The Brazilian Movement of Blind and Low Vision Women began in 2015 when a group of visually impaired women perceived the low representation of women in disability civil rights movements in Brazil, especially in administrative positions. This situation resulted in the non-inclusion of issues that directly affect women's lives: sexual and reproductive rights, education, and work, as well as important issues regarding public and private life that emerge from family and social relationships. While the movement began in Brazil's northeast region, it has since expanded to other regions and organized seven annual national meetings in different Brazilian cities.

Since the III Meeting, the MBMC has been under collegiate management through national executive coordination. This decision removed hierarchical distinctions and promoted the circularity that encompasses the feminine. In a circle, one faces the other, and the conversation ensures each subject equally participates in the decisions. A collective of women that seek to reinforce their participation in society empower women with visual impairment, and promote public policies for this sector without ignoring intersectionalities as they further acknowledge social causes through an understanding of gender, ethnic/racial, class, generation, and territory issues. These women are leaders with active participation in the social movement of blind people in Brazil and a solid career in the formulation of public policies for people with disabilities, policies for women, defending the rights of people with disabilities, human rights, cultural policies, accessibility, and inclusion.

In 2019, a meeting with one of the leaders that is part of the executive coordination of the movement in an activity held during the XIII Mercosul Anthropology Meeting, led to an invitation to mediate the Conversation Circle “Employment Barriers for women with visual impairment” at the V MBMC National Meeting. There emerged the cornerstone of the anthropoetic² and engaged research project that we held today. Furthermore, it was where we lived the collective ethnographic experience that generated the raw material for the production of this text, a co-authored testimony of an event.

Since then, our partnership has existed within a very unusual relationship, entangled in a web of trust, affection, and life. Our work has been one of intense collaboration all along the way. We venture towards decentralization of research practices in favor of a shared and collective knowledge production process based on feminine ethical principles of science, such as the willingness to establish relationships with the investigative subject, an attentive listening to the problems emerging from the research materials (Stengers, 1989), a partial and located perspective (Haraway, 1988/1995), as well as attention, affection, and trust (Despret, 2004).

ENGAGED WRITING, EMBODIED THINKING

The methodological stakes of this work, facilitated by anthropologist Olivia von der Weid, arise from the intertwining of anthropology and the artistic field. Creating intensified body spaces, which extend the limits of the body beyond its contours (Gil, 2001), the anthropologist has been carrying out, since her PhD (von der Weid, 2014), a “somatic investigation” (Fernandes, 2019) in the encounter with blindness. A research modality that includes immersion in a living environment as a fundamental principle, integrating, in real-time, experience and analysis. By transforming attention to the sensory universe and body movement into a research technique, it seeks to dilute the traditional separation between subject and object in scientific practice, generating a relational and dynamic way of creating knowledge. The interface with the artistic field, especially with the body in expressive movement, helps to create other states of consciousness in research practice. A path that has been shaped in the search for connecting the moving body, in a creative state of presence, with the construction of knowledge³.

Our work yearns to open participants to the cultivation of intensive bodies and new forms of subjectivation. The invitation towards movement, with the occasional support of sensory objects, serves as a device to activate corporal memory. The somatic practices provide us with the tools to shift ingrained patterns of domination, using the body as an instrument for activating life potencies. We practice attentive speaking and listening and the interactive sharing of unique sensations and experiences. Each sharing – existing within a dynamic of proximities and distances, similarities and differences—enables other knowledges about ourselves and the world. Each encounter opens up to the unexpected, allowing the affective component to emerge in the embodied experience and mirror what happens in the circle. Hence, we emphasize this project’s therapeutic, artistic, and political potential, always open to the unpredictable.

The workshop was built as a space for experimentation that is produced both by shared experiences and by *corpogravures*, an exercise in creating words or images that helps to embody the forces and meanings germinating in the singular experience of being a woman with visual impairment. By activating bodily memories and what they teach us, we seek to map the obstacles encountered in their trajectories, the internalized forms of domination, and their impacts on the experience and subjectivity of visually impaired women. As Hammer (2013) suggested, an ethnography of blindness raises specific complexities from the unbalanced power relations in the researcher’s gaze. Research demands the development of an alternative sensory awareness, one which challenges the traditional association of knowledge with sight and gaze. Such a stance demands defamiliarization and disidentification with certain habits anchored in “normal” and normative ways of doing things in both everyday life and research practices, thus allowing us to perceive the strangeness of established Western colonialist views about the corporality of women with disabilities.

As we grow increasingly aware of our bodies and the oppressions and alienations we endure, as much as our skills and sensibilities, we allow new modes of existence and narratives to harbor within us. We thus envision possible futures to celebrate the diversity of bodies and their singular and collective needs. The turning point for addressing these issues stems from a dialogue with and about the lives and subjectivities of blind women while

at the same time reverberating reflections about other human and non-human corporalities and existences and the novel possibilities of arrangements and conditions for their coexistences.

The proposal dialogues with other initiatives that rely on art both as a means of knowledge production and as a form of resistance and political intervention, stimulating the constitution of new existential territories (Pink, 2009; Pussetti, 2015; Eugenio & Salgado, 2018). These are works that seek to destabilize the rigidity of disciplinary boundaries by defending the open, experimental, and artisanal dimension of research. The reconnection of science with practices considered marginal, which helps to “reactivate”—using an expression by Stengers (2012/2017)—experimental, speculative, creative, and combative aspects of scientific knowledge. Bringing body, gestures, and movement as motivating elements of exchange and knowledge production, treating skin as a map of our experiences, we propose here thinking and writing with our bodies and not about our bodies (Farnell, 2000), composing the living image of an event, with the embodied words of visually impaired women and what they reverberate.

CORPOGRAVURE, EMBODIED WORD

We are now at a national meeting of strong women, coming with their deviated bodies from the most diverse corners and nooks of a huge country. In the city of Curitiba, they gathered for four days at the V National Meeting of the Brazilian Movement of Blind and Low Vision Women in October 2019. What brings them here? Bodies that were marked by a double differentiating quality of existence at some point in history: being a visually impaired woman. Being a visually impaired woman in a society that time and again does not even consider the difference of disability as a social marker worthy of mention in the ranks of oppression and inequality. A common experience is to read or hear words of solidarity acknowledging differences of class, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and sometimes even generation. Moreover, lives with disabilities persist in a vacuum, eventually counted as others, etcetera. Cutting silencing well expresses the non-belonging to the dominant way of life that most of us humans will never take part in and yet continues to suffocate everyone’s existence. Where do we come from? Where are we going? What is it for? Who am I? For whom does it matter? Questions that make your skin crawl.

Their life experiences insist on illuminating the multiple nature of humanity within a cosmology that has taken the body as a universal substrate, independent of others and functioning as a mechanism. Those whose corporalities resist the training that shapes and subjects the productive bodies of modernity (Foucault, 2010). The second nature that colonial-capitalist socialization imposes on everyone—the useful and capable “normalcy”—is also the same one that oppresses and excludes diverse bodies that, unable to perform the civilizing subjectivity and its normative protocols of behavior, are often thrown at the border of humanity (Hughes, 2012). Enabling people with disabilities to gain access to the system as it currently stands, or including them in the engagements and lives of “able-bodied” people only when it is convenient for them, does not change the ableist logic by which the system is organized. The logic that each of us corporally holds in the way we move and do things in everyday life. It is time to evoke, as Mia Mingus once said, the transformative power of disability (Mingus, 2017).

The women present there elect every day not to shrink from experiences that haunt their bodies with incapacity. Exorcising *ableism*, the assumption of normalcy that daily materializes in buildings and sidewalks, in metrics and relationships, that jumps from the street corners, endures in traffic lights, sometimes resonating in the inevitable requests for help and in the well-known and perverse stories of overcoming. Give back to the social what belongs to the social. It is not our bodies’ fault. It is exhausting. It is not easy to always be making the counterpoint of oneself. An external transformation that goes through an internal transformation: of the fears, of the imprisoning patterns, of the positions that one stopped taking because of an arbitrary contrary force that one cannot always face alone. That is why they collectivize. They destabilize the movement. They dare to look to the future and think: I deserve a better place. They do not allow themselves to be plastered to any stereotype. Reality is built through passion. The desire for the new springs up in the womb, finds its way through the pores, and generates the involvement that brought us here.

Let us go back to that morning when the anthropologist and the women of the movement met in a circle for the first time. –“What does the woman I read the articles about have to tell us?” thought one of the movement’s leaders; –“What authorizes me to be here?” for her part, thought the woman from

the articles, touched by the stories of struggles, impacted by the power of these women and the energy of communion circulating in her body during the three days of intense work that preceded that morning. It is always the threads of encounters and relationships that authorize. In one word: trust. We were weaving together. The expectation was quite high. We were all being given the opportunity to live a new experience.

United in a circle, the bound hands spin the pulse and warmth of female lives. Courage, when it is circular contaminates, we dare to take a step beyond. With their present presences, they challenge the label of incapacity and lack, reducer of existences. The voices were silent for a moment so that they could get in touch with everything that had hindered or impeded their professional life trajectory. Instead of words in the wind, they would express the traces of oppressions lived through sonorities, forming small groups by the resonance of the vibratory patterns that made the body and the vocal cords tremble.

From the mouths come sounds that “the logic of meaning has not yet totally hidden” (Artaud, 1995, p. 21), the organic base of the words, what still remains of the oppressed gesture. An “Ouch!” coming from the depths of the memory of an intense pain arouses from other women, other “ouch” sufferers. Sufferings engraved in the soul. Pains that were thought to be forgotten emerge and are for a moment relived. Impregnation of the consciousness by sensorial marks. We are in the “world of contagions,” in which bodies, through encounters with other bodies, provoke the emergence of their repelled parts. Shared pains are soothed pains. Together we let ourselves to be affected by them, dynamizing their potencies in the encounter of bodies. Enabling the emergence of living bodies that can exist affirmatively.

Torturing memories permeated the narratives, generating a resonance that supersedes the materiality of life’s baggage. In the groups, the stories met in essence. The cry of one was the cry of all. The loneliness in the family, socially and professionally. Harsh stories like those of a family that threw the girl in the river because she was disabled. Another whose mother left her in the lurch, living with an unknown person who mistreated her. To be considered a victim or a hero. Getting used to not being understood, looking like a stranger in the nest, and being an ugly duckling. – “She’s so beautiful! Too bad she’s blind...”; stares we receive, voices we

constantly hear. As a point of congruence, there was all the burden of perversity and prejudice tied to the overt discrimination of their bodies. Life not lived, badly lived, violated. Not understood, not made possible, not invested in, not accepted, not respected, not prioritized... So many no’s. But we do not want to. We can’t wait. Life is now!

The survival strategy was often to minimize problems, not lose focus, maintain resilience, and ignore much of what was coming from other people. The fighting spirit, the will to win, and the vital need to find that strength that comes from within ourselves. Strength in partnerships, determination to seek the best for oneself, and not letting one’s destiny fulfill what was already pre-established by society. Say a resounding No and go after the Yes.

In the years that pass, we become entangled with other blind women, elaborate new discourses, and are more open to talk about our desires, our youth, our aging, our sexuality, our prejudices, our improprieties, and our children. Of violence. Of all that we commit and all that is committed against us. Of the almost powerful, and at the same time irremediable, certainty that none of it can be called overcoming. It is our vital force, which moves us, appropriates us, and, as a great woman in our movement says, reverberates—over and within us—visually impaired women. At the same time, it marks us and transforms us. It pushes us to walk.

The elaboration of subjectivity does not inexhaustibly charge us the price of adjustment. We live small daily impossibilities, like sitting in the wrong place, taking the drink by mistake from a glass that is not yours, not talking to someone you wish you could meet because you did not find them, or did not recognize your voice in the middle of a racket. The trajectories are not individual. They are entangled in a wider web: social, cultural, political, symbolic. What reverberates in the other reverberates in me. Knowledge liberates, but it has to pass through the body. It is with me, but it only grows when I share it. To think is to articulate with life. If I am my own leader, the steps I take might inspire other paths. When I speak, I am also listening. The other is me. I silence and hear.

“What did that laugh represent?” Very tasty, very spontaneous, her laugh. It is a laugh of victory, not of debauchery. It is not because we are blind that we cannot make art. But we still do not have much recognition in art. We laugh at the possibility of occupying that place that was and still is, very

much denied to us. The window of expression. Art as a place where you are seen: the place of visibility. We, blind and low-vision women, can occupy that place. Open this window. We have something to say about vision. We have something to say about image. We have something to say about being seen, and we have expressiveness to put into the world. With the lightness and the joy of laughter.

A firm foot strikes dry on the ground, marking, in the conviction of the gesture, the limit that one no longer wants to cross. We all stamp our feet every day, for different reasons, in different situations. We are obliged to put our foot down, or else we will be trapped in defeatism. Internal resolution: I will not allow it here anymore. We think about the women who are not here, who did not have the strength to take this attitude. I cannot seek only for myself; I must take it to my equals. Finding in the collective a rudder, a light, a direction. Once the resolution strengthens in me, it will contaminate the people around me. Those who were able to go, drag the others, encourage the others, and take along with them those who still lack courage. Change by contagion. Our fight is still big, but we have to make noise, we cannot stop.

“I chose that cry for help because inside me many doors are not closed,” shared one of the women in her small group. In the complicity of the encounter, hidden feelings slowly emerge through the doors opening. The pain that fights and makes us alert still burns and makes us suffer. We are made to cry. The skin sweats, tense and strong. The vibration is felt through the pores, and the sweat comes down uncontrollably. Other faces reveal themselves. When we have a trauma, it is necessary to talk about it; it is necessary to touch this problem so that it can develop. There are fears today that we did not even imagine were connected to certain things that happened to us back then, but they are totally connected. The pains of each one were poignant, burning in the fire of our darkest alleys of the soul.

The energy that flows in that cry warms strong embraces. Crying out for help in the same tune brings liberation. Freedom to be on this orb, living in a way less conditioned to what ties us back there. It weighs much less. To experience breathing in a more absolute and conscious way. To free the -1 from that which permeates our existences. Snakes that leave their skins there, leaving in search of new experiences. Something has blossomed so strongly and lightly. How can it be so strong and light at the

same time? Two feelings that move apart and, at the same time complement each other. It brought recognition of oneself and the other.

A soft, singing sound gathers around its women searching for a place to rest. The place of the little white house with flowers in the window. Although they have fulfilled their professional tasks in exemplary fashion, receiving the recognition they deserve, they feel deep down inside that their journey could have been lighter. Bodies marked by extreme dedication and self-doubt. They attributed the rigidity of their postures to the visual limitation and also to the +1, a demand for overcoming imposed within their families. It was necessary to compensate, to overcome, to gain independence, and still be an example! With so many demands, where do we find the pause? Awareness of the need to seek a comfort break where one can breathe, undress from so much struggle, nourish oneself with relaxation, to be well with oneself. We must allow ourselves to search for the so dreamed happiness.

Life's mysteries are revealed when we open our body and soul to the discoveries. Tiredness and the need to relax in order to feel better were a collective manifestation that went deep in each of us. A longing to live more peacefully, a place of belonging. The setbacks came, and we all created our armor for the necessary confrontation. Talking about the marks brings movement. This movement takes away the silt. It makes room for new things. Who will be for us but ourselves? The echo of these words makes the cells of our tissues vibrate.

The sensitive listening built a kind of elastic bed so we could all fully throw ourselves into the experience. Opportunity to openly put ourselves to each other, safely, in the moment of venting. No one here is any longer a hostage of the fear, violence, or oppression they experienced. Scars will always compose our senses, but they no longer have the burden they once had. We dive deep into that wonderful atmosphere, despite so much pain. Once we accept the challenge, we become electrically bonded. In the beauty of sharing is the connection established. A rare kind of complicity and trust. We are parts of a complex organism that feeds on the two-way track of relationships. This is what sustains us.

We realized the paths we were forced to take in order to make the best of everything we suffered. Physical and psychological pain of almost

unimaginable proportions. But it was real life we were talking about, not fictional tales. Each time you tell this story, a little more violence comes out of your body. We have fallen many times, but life has taught us to hold our heads high when we fall and still help other people. Our will to live and overcome barriers was greater than anything. It is up to you, it is your life. It does not matter what they did to us, but what we choose to do with what they tried to do to us. The human being has an amazing capacity to adapt, but we have to choose to adapt to the good things. You do not have to get used to violence. We have to choose what is best for us. That's what we deserve. To be in the place where we want to be.

When we look at it from the perspective of disability, life comes and hits us with a steamroller. It comes, and it does not come soft. It comes like a hammer, something that overwhelms you and puts you to a test of endurance, of resilience. It is very striking. As if you were all the time with a cry for help on your lips, in your heart. As if there was something stuck in your throat. A movement like this is the releasing of the throat, it is you screaming and asking for help and being sure there are people there to listen.

Together we wrote another story with more interesting chapters. We recognized the value of every tear and every gesture of compassion and empathy received. It was an opportunity to let out a little of what we have carried for years in the depths of our hearts. It was very hard to listen and talk, but it was very rewarding to feel the electric current running through our skin. We took care of each other; we listened to each other; we cried together; we helped each other. Those who know how to benefit from the exchange get nourished and receive a recharge of energy to be able to connect and move on. Our pores opened in flower, exhaling a perfume of plenitude and consciousness of our place in the magnificent dance of life.

Words fade away, but feelings become eternal. Time gives us the condition of distance; love gives us the condition of affection. An event etched into the skin, where the energy is never lost, spinning alive in the exchanges. In the same way it leaves me, it will return in a different way. I will recognize her in the embrace, containing all the layers of pain and joy of that morning. The moment was not lost. It is pulsating in each one of us, in a place called liberation: the sharing, the touch, the

loving listening, and being able to be another. The circularity brought us back to life.

What does a body that does not come as society expects have to offer? Will we ever be able to let go of all this past? Will we be able to live without being attached to these great memories? Everything we live and everything we reflect is directly connected to what we have been and what we are. We are women of the present time; we perceive life from where we are today. We do not get emotional with easy speeches; we do not look back with nostalgia or feelings of loss. I fight not to intervene in other people's lives with my choices, my consensuses or dissensuses. Choices belong to each and every one of us. And ours are specific of the women we are, the life we live, the significant places for the understandings and narratives we make. "Holy mother, may God give us long life!" May we leave a little of ourselves in every corner we go through.

We understand the struggle for autonomy for blind and low-vision women as arduous and just. It is necessary to be built every day. It becomes faster and fuller from the perspective of alterity: I see myself in the other, and I see myself in so many others. It is always imperative to make considerations about the narratives we build about disability, adding to this our trajectories that are built inside or outside the gate. We ourselves need to build narratives that perceive us from another place, to expand our spaces of participation. The question that presents itself every time before you: At what point will the women that I am, as a person with a disability, an Afro-descendant, a feminist, or a socialist, find themselves in the same place? Less detached from themselves and more appropriate to their struggles and paths to be taken. I still need to plow inside me other women, other Cristinas, other Gislanas, other Helenas, other Cinthyas, other Raquéis, other Marilenas, other Jucelmas, other Ritas, other Terezinhas, other Olivias, other Anas Paulas, other Aldaís, who will surely also be in search of themselves and in search of the other women who inhabit their bodies.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 These questions are part of the Engaged Research Project “On skin’s surface: Poetics and Politics of Blindness in Brazil”, sponsored by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research through the Engaged Research Grant 2022.
- 2 An anthropoetics has been thought of as a poetic, ethical and political way of doing research in anthropology that recognizes the need to decolonize knowledge, seeks more symmetrical relationships between research subjects, developing poetic and creative experimentations that can involve the entire research process (Pinheiro, Magni & Kosby, 2019).
- 3 The anthropologist’s experience with sensory and participatory modes of investigation, which she has been developing since 2011 in her research activities on blindness, hereby converges with Authentic Movement, a somatic-relational practice that she has been engaged with for the past four years, under the guidance of Soraya Jorge, who introduced the Authentic Movement in Brazil and Lisbon. To find out more about the practice of Authentic Movement in Brazil access: <https://www.movimentoautentico.com/>